

The Rush County Board of Commissioners met in regular session Monday, November 30, 2015 with Commissioners Bruce Levi, Mark Bacon, Paul Wilkinson, Jodi Harr, Deputy Auditor and Attorney Leigh Morning in attendance.

Commissioner Bruce Levi called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of the November 16th meeting were approved on a motion by Mark Bacon. Paul Wilkinson seconded the motion with an amendment to the minutes Audience Participation. John Saxon suggested at the November 16th meeting the commissioners take local bids for the purchase of new blinds. Motion carried.

Minutes of the special meeting held on November 23 were approved on a motion by Mark Bacon. Paul Wilkinson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CLAIMS

The bi-weekly claims and allowance docket was presented to the Board. Mark Bacon moved to allow the claims and Paul Wilkinson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Payroll claims for December 4th were submitted. Marvin Rees representing the APC Board stated the APC board has questions regarding the payroll claim submitted for the Area Plan Office. The Director is not in this morning for the board to question her. The APC board would like to review the claim before the Director's pay is issued. It will be Thursday, December 3, before the board will have a chance to meet with her. Paul Wilkinson made the motion to approve payroll with the exception of the Area Plan Director pay. The Director pay will not be made until after the APC Board meets with her. Her pay will be adjusted on the next payroll date of December 18 for any pay due her. Mark Bacon seconded. Motion carried.

EMPLOYEE WELLNES

Monica Hamill ask permission to use the third floor of the courthouse on December 22, 2015 from 4:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. to hold a one- time Breath and Movement Yoga Class for any interested county employee. The class would be done as part of the Rush To Health program. She has contacted the offices on the third floor to confirm that this will not interrupt their business on that day. Mark Bacon made the motion to allow the one-time use of the courthouse with the understanding that Monica provide the auditor with copy of her insurance. Paul Wilkinson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS

Commissioner Levi reminded those in attendance that applications are due in the Auditor's Office by Monday, November 30th at 4:00p.m. for anyone interested in applying for any of the commissioners appointments.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Dr. Dorothy Boersma, Health Officer of the Rush County Health Department, notified the commissioners that the Health Board is recommending that Dr. Helen Steussy be hired as the Health Officer from February 1, 2016 until 12/31/16. Mark Bacon made the motion to approve Dr. Steussy as the Health Officer. Paul Wilkinson seconded. Motion carried.

As part of the Public Health Preparedness Grant, Dr. Boersma presented the commissioners with a Mutual Aid Agreement for Indiana Public Health Preparedness District 6 and asked for them to approve Rush County's participation in the program. Dr. Boersma explained to those in attendance about the PHAB, Public Health Accreditation Board. The Rush County Health Department is making great strides in becoming accredited. Paul Wilkinson made the motion to move forward with participating in the mutual aid agreement and for the commissioners to sign the Mutual Aid Agreement. Mark Bacon seconded. Motion carried.

EMS RUNS

The following EMS monthly ambulance reports were filed; Anderson Twp for October and Carthage EMS for September and October. It was noted that dual dispatch with Carthage and Raleigh seems to be working. Carthage is still working on getting more staff trained.

HIGHWAY

Superintendent Jerry Sitton had nothing to report. Commissioner Bruce Levi asked for an update on the Carthage Pike repairs. They are on hold waiting on INDOT to verify that the cost of repairs can be done with left over project funds. Since these are federal funds, they need approval from the federal government.

SHERIFF

Sheriff Jim Cowan reported 38 inmates housed in the jail. His department is continuing to work with Owens Communication to fine-tune the new 911 consoles.

YOUTH CAMP AMENDMENT

An amendment to the zoning ordinance to include a separation of a minimum of one mile from a CFO/CAFO and a youth camp received a favorable recommendation from the Area Plan Commission. A youth camp must be certified by the State Department of Health. The current ordinance sets a minimum of one mile from a CFO/CAFO and a public school. Public comments were as follows:

Elbert Gordon – Confined feeding is part of agriculture today. He is not in favor to the proposed changes to the zoning ordinance.

David Todd - President of the Harvest Christian Camp. The objective is to define the existing ordinance by making sure the children at camp are protected the same as children at school. It is the same children. The APC board, Glenwood Town Board and Carthage Town Board all

gave favorable recommendations to changing the ordinance. His voice is to protect the children and not to be a bad neighbor.

Ben Wicker – He is a local farmer. Ag land must be protected for agriculture use. This could encourage those who are against agriculture growth to request more camps with a buffer throughout agriculture zoned areas. Local farmers are a big part of the tax base in Rush County. Livestock is a growing part of agriculture business.

Wade Beatty – representing the Ag Round Table. His family has been raised within one mile of a CAFO. They have had no health problems related to the CAFO. The original ordinance was written over a two year period with much thought and time put into them. He urges the commissioners to deny the ordinance change.

Robert Pumphrey – He operates a CAFO. IDEM monitors them on a regular basis and the environmental standards set by IDEM should be considered. He is against the amendment.

Matthew Elson – He grew up on a farm with a CAFO. He believes youth camps were not considered during the two year period of writing the current ordinance. It is expensive to build and operate youth camps. He is not asking to change the ordinance; just define it. Camps have a positive impact on a child's future. He feels the one mile buffer could still be used as farm land just not with a CAFO on it.

Greg Hall – Chairman of the Rush County Ag Round Table. When the CFO/CAFO was re-written in 2007 the goal was to protect the agriculture zone and also to protect individuals that live in and out of the agricultural zones. There a large cross-section of people on the team who wrote the current ordinance. The ordinance has almost eliminated the need to have special exception hearings for zoning. Proper protections are in place with the current ordinance.

Leigh Morning- speaking as a citizen of Rush County. She has spoken to the Henry County Area Plan Director. The House of Prayer camp is assessed as a church in Henry County. Henry County zoning rules do not have specifications for youth camps. Henry County would not be able to enforce the zoning regulations set in Rush County for property located in Henry County. The current Henry County Zoning Ordinance would allow a ½ mile protection around the camp property.

Anna Todd – A child of the House of Prayer camp. She grew up at the camp and worked at the camp. It has changed her life.

Bethal Marcy – Her children have attended the camp. She is concerned with the quality of the water and soil twenty years from now if the ordinance is not amended. Put people and the future before profit.

Matthew Elson – The House of Prayer has gone to the Henry County Area Plan Office and they have gotten very little response from them.

Kristen Heisman – Executive Director of the camp. Youth camps should be treated the same as schools.

Kay Colvin – She is a firm believer in farming and in the youth camp and does not want to see the children hindered.

Don Biehl – The health, safety and welfare of the children is his main concern. He is in favor of the amendment.

Greg Amos – He has grown up in a confined feeding environment and is not in favor of the amendment.

Steve Chaflan – He noted the ordinance was updated in 2007 and the original ordinance was established in the 1970's. He asked if the church/camp was aware of the ordinance when the land was purchased or were they made aware of the ordinance at its adoption. He is in favor of confined feeding. He is against the amended ordinance.

Gretchen Harris – She moved to this area because of the camp not the church. She has seen children's lives changed. They learn life skills while at camp.

Arthur Whitaker – He is in support of the camp.

Josh Miller – He is the Executive Director of Mahoney Valley Christian Youth Camp. While at the camp, he cannot tell that there are two CFO's within a mile of the camp. It could have something to do with the wind direction. Outside opportunities are shrinking for today's children. Going to camp gets them outside away from television and electronics. He does feel like the smell will reduce the number of kids who attend camp.

With no other comments from the public in attendance, each of the commissioners gave their view of the current and proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance.

Commissioner Bruce Levi has spoken to several people about this issue. He has looked at health concerns and reports from the Purdue Extension Office. The farmer bought the land under the current ordinance.

Commissioner Mark Bacon appreciates all of the comments he has heard today. He farms and raises livestock. He believes that CFO's and CAFO's are safer now than in the past due to the stringent laws in place by IDEM. The current ordinance has a setback of 750 feet. The proposed confinement is more than 2,000 feet. He also attended Mahoney Valley Camp as a youth and remembers at that time cattle ran through the stream that goes through the camp. He was also on the committee which re-wrote the ordinance in 2007. Confinements are ran much better now than in the past. He is not in favor of changing the ordinance.

Commissioner Paul Wilkinson stated his values are probably the same as 99% of the people in the room and that we all have to be good neighbors. He also has worked with children. He does not believe the camp will be non-existent if the CFO/CAFO is allowed and is not sure the agriculture would be hurt if the ordinance was changed. He has looked at Purdue studies and attended Ag Round Table discussions. He believes the camp and the agriculture community can co-exist. He is not in favor of amending the ordinance.

Commissioner Mark Bacon made the motion to reject the proposed amendment to the Rush County Zoning Ordinance. Paul Wilkinson seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Chairman Bruce Levi noted he was in favor of rejecting the proposed amendment.

SOLID WASTE

Carole Yeend reminded everyone that ToxAway is this Saturday, December 5.

EMA

Chuck Kemker, EMA Director, presented the Commissioners a Resolution allowing Mark Bacon and Mary Ann Beard, Auditor, to sign Department of Homeland Security funding request. This goes along with the same two mentioned individuals to sign with e-signatures. Commissioner Paul Wilkinson made the motion to allow Mark Bacon and Mary Ann Beard to sign any actions or documents related to obtaining state or federal assistance through the Department of Homeland Security. Commissioner Mark Bacon seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Frances Mozingo asked if the commissioners are aware that farmers in the State of Ohio are bringing their poultry liter into Rush County to be spread here. She lives around 350 East. Greg Hall commented local farmers do purchase poultry liter for their fields but it is regulated by the Office of Indiana State Chemistry.

Mark Bacon moved to adjourn and Paul Wilkinson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

/s/ Bruce Levi
Bruce Levi, Chairman

/s/ Mark Bacon
Mark Bacon

/s/ Paul Wilkinson
Paul Wilkinson

ATTEST:

/s/ Mary Ann Beard
Mary Ann Beard, Auditor